

COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT;

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From the well-known character and abilities
of the Editor of this Paper, and the vital impor-
tance of the cause it advocates, we hope that
every citizen will consider it his duty to aid in
giving the "Common School Assistant" a cir-
culation in every family and School in the Union.

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COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT.

A Report on the State of Public Instruction
in Prussia; by Victor Cousin, Peer of
France, Member of the Council of Public
Instruction, &c. Translated by Sarah
Austin; and republished by Wiley &
Long: New-York.

This Report contains instruction on the
important subject of education from the high-
est authority and the most enlightened
source. Its author is a scholar, a legislator
and a philosopher, and the book is a full and
faithful statement of the organization and
working of the best school system which le-
gislators have devised. In providing prac-
tical means for giving the *whole people* that
kind and degree of knowledge which they
need, the Prussian government has done
more than any other government either in
Europe or America. Says Cousin in a sup-
plement to his report, "there does not exist
a single human being throughout Prussia
who does not receive an education sufficient
for the moral and intellectual wants of the
laboring classes." How wise and paternal is
the administration of this despotic govern-
ment, and how far from doing this are the
school laws in all of these United States.
The education which the children receive in
many of our common schools, is but very
little better than entire ignorance. In rela-
tion to the business of life, there is not much
instruction in our elementary schools. The
scholars learn to pronounce words, without
obtaining any meaning from them; to write
a poor hand if their paper is ruled and their
pens made; to work out the examples of
the Arithmetic without seeing their practical
application; and to commit to memory the
words of the Geography and the Grammar.
This constitutes nearly the whole of a com-
mon school education. In school the pupils
learn nothing of the nature of the civil gov-
ernment and of their duties to it; nothing of
their duties to society and the duties of pub-
lic officers; nothing of agriculture or me-

chanics; nothing of the nature of man, phy-
sical or moral; and nothing of the duties to
their Creator, to their neighbor, or to them-
selves. Our common schools do but little
to prepare the scholars for the duties and
avocations of after life. Education in this
country is even more defective than defi-
cient; and consequently our schools must
be improved as well as multiplied. That we
may see what Prussia is doing, and be as-
sisted by her experience and wisdom, I will
now make a few extracts from Cousin's re-
port, which show the structure of her orga-
nized school system. The following extract
shows the divisions and the officers of the
several departments: page 12.

"Prussia is divided into ten provinces,
viz. East Prussia, West Prussia, Posen,
Pomerania, Brandenburg, Silesia, Saxony,
Westphalia, Cleves, Lower Rhine.

"Each of these provinces is subdivided
into departments, called *Regierungs-Be-
zirke* (government or regency-circles,) which
comprise a district of greater or less
extent.

"Each of these departments is again sub-
divided into other circles, smaller than our
arrondissements and larger than our *cantons*,
called *Kreise* (circles,) and each of these
lesser circles is again divided into *Gemeinde
communes*, (parishes.)

"Each department has a sort of council
of prefecture, called a Regency (*Regierung*)
which has its president, who corresponds
nearly to our prefect, only he is more
controlled by the sense of the majority. As
each department has its president, so like-
wise has each province one, bearing the title
Oberpräsident, (over, or head president.)

"All the gradations or stages of public in-
struction are adapted to the different stages
of this ascending scale of administrators.
Almost every province has its university.

"East and West Prussia and Posen, which
join, have the university of Königsburg;
Pomerania, of Griefswald; Silesia, of Bres-
lau; Saxony, of Halle; Brandenburg, of
Berlin; Westphalia, the imperfect univer-
sity called the academy of Münster; the
Rhenish provinces, the university of Bonn.

"Each of these universities has its own
authorities, elected by itself under the su-
perintendence of a royal commissary, nomi-
nated by the minister of public instruction,
and in direct correspondence with him. This
is the *curator* of the ancient German univer-
sities. This post is always given to some
man of weight in the province, in great part
as an honorary distinction, but invariably
with a certain salary attached. Indeed gen-
erally speaking, the spirit of the Prussian
monarchy is decidedly adverse to unpaid
functionaries of any kind.

In this simple and efficient organization
each local officer has his duties distinctly
prescribed; and every departmental author-
ity is also responsible to the minister of pub-
lic instruction. This officer, in Prussia,
takes a high rank. Says M. Cousin, p. 4th
and 5th.

"In Prussia the minister of public instruc-
tion enjoys a rank and authority equal to
those of any of his colleagues. * * *

"In the next place, the high rank assign-
ed to the head of public instruction marks
the respect in which every thing relating to
that important subject is held by the govern-
ment; hence science assumes her proper
place in the state. Civilization, the intel-
lectual and moral interests of society have
their appointed ministry. This ministry em-
braces every thing relating to science, and
consequently to all schools, libraries, and
kindred institutions—such as botanic gar-
dens, museums, cabinets, the lower schools
of surgery and medicine, academies of mu-
sic, &c. Indeed it is perfectly natural, that
the minister who is the guardian of public
instruction, should be guardian of the great
collections and libraries, without which in-
struction is impossible."

In our own country every state requires a
separate officer of public instruction. This
officer in Prussia gives his whole attention to
the schools and state of education. But in
the state of New-York the general superin-
tendent of common schools, is likewise,
"Secretary of State." This, experience,
reflection, and Prussian practice, tell us is
wrong. There should be nothing to divert
the attention of that minister who has the
general supervision of the people's education.
It will be necessary for him to travel much,
that he may from personal observation de-
tect the origin of evils, and thus be better
qualified to apply the remedies. If he is sta-
tionary, as our present superintendents now
are, he must depend upon the accounts of
others, having no personal knowledge of the
schools, or the workings of the school sys-
tem. This officer should, also, take the
highest rank. In Prussia and in France the
"Minister of Instruction" ranks with the
highest officers of state. But singular as it
may seem, in our own country, where edu-
cation if possible is much more important,
this is not the case. *Several of the states even,
have never had any such officer!!* This is a
great defect, and is one cause of the low
state of popular education in several of the
states. No school system will have an ac-
tive, efficient operation without a head. The
minister of public instruction is the life of
the school system in Prussia. He consults
the "councils" for the best plans and mea-
sures; he sends qualified inspectors to ex-
amine the schools in every part of the gov-
ernment; he sees that the departmental
authorities perform their respective duties,
that the schools are supplied with proper
teachers and books, that the parents send their
children to school, and that there is an
equitable distribution of the public school
fund. These are laborious and important
duties, and the first step, towards educating
the people for each state in this Union, is
the appointment of a minister of public in-
struction.

In Russia the minister has a "council"
to consult and advise. Says Cousin, p. 7th,

"In those departments in which the administration is, if I may so speak, rather material than moral, we can understand that a minister may do without a council; but when his ministry is essentially moral like that of public instruction, which requires not only attention to laws and regulation, but a mass of rare, various and profound knowledge, in which business almost always resolves itself into questions of science, it is evident that the minister must have the aid of counsellors, to perpetuate the principles and the spirit which become traditional in public bodies, and which a single and variable head might constantly overthrow; to make new rules or modify old ones; to aid the judgment of the minister as to what establishments to found, or what to suppress; above all to guide him in the appreciation and the choice of men, and to serve as a rampart to ward off solicitation and intrigue."

There is another admirable supervision over the Prussian schools; we quote from p. 11th.

"If the minister learns from his correspondence that things are not going on well in any establishment, he sends an inspector best qualified for the particular case. This inspector chosen for the particular occasion, instantly repairs to the place where his presence is needed; makes an inspection, the more accurate and profound because it is special; returns to Berlin, makes his report immediately, and a prompt and efficacious decision follows."

From the want of a travelling inspector our superintendents have not that information from the schools which they ought to possess.

In this country, neither the legislature nor the general superintendents have attended to the books which are used in the schools. On this subject the school act of Prussia, says, p. 59:

"If there is a deficiency of elementary books in any branch of learning, the minister shall see that proper ones be written or compiled."

This we think is the duty of ministers of public instruction in the United States. Our schools are not furnished with suitable books; neither is there any uniformity in the school books now in use. Much might be done for the cause of education in this republic, if the minister would "see that proper books were written or compiled."

The following extract contains the duties of parents in educating their children. Although a little contrary to our feelings, and the spirit of our civil institutions, yet it shows what Prussia requires of parents: pp. 24, 5, 6, and 8.

"In Prussia, the state has long imposed on all parents the strict obligation of sending their children to school, unless they are able to prove that they are giving them a competent education at home. This duty has been successively defined and regulated with precision for the different seasons of the year. (see in Neigebauer's Collections, pp. 186 and 187, the circular of Frederick the Great, dated Jan. 1, 1769;) it has been subjected to severe supervision. Lastly in the great attempts at codification which took place in 1794, it assumed its place

among the fundamental laws of the state. The two articles of the general code relating to this obligation are as follows: *Allgemeines Landrecht*, Part, II, title XII.

"Art. 43. Every inhabitant who cannot, or will not, cause the needful instruction to be given to his children at home, is bound to send them to school from the age of five years.

"Art. 44. From that age no child shall omit going to school, nor absent himself from it for any length of time, unless under particular circumstances, and with the consent of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

"The legislative project of 1819, which has the force of law, and regulates the present order of things throughout the country, devotes an entire title or chapter (Title IV.) to this obligation, which it follows out into its most minute application. I cannot do better than quote the exact text of this title of the law of 1819, with the whole array of regulations, at once rigorous and prudent, which it contains. You will thus be made acquainted with both the letter and the spirit of the Prussian law on this important point.

"Parents or guardians are bound to send their children or wards to the public school; or to provide in some other manner that they receive a competent education.

"Parents, or those on whom children are dependent (and under this head are comprehended masters or manufacturers who have children as servants or as apprentices, at an age when they should go to school,) shall be bound to give them a suitable education, from their seventh year to their fourteenth inclusive. The schoolmaster shall judge whether a child gives proof of sufficient precocity to enter the school before that age, and the school committee (*Schulvorstand*) shall grant an authority for its admission. A child who shall have gone through the whole course of elementary instruction before the age of fourteen, cannot be taken away from school by its parents without the permission of the committee, nor till after the members of the committee charged with the inspection of the school shall have proceeded to an examination of the pupil, which must be fully satisfactory as to health and morals. It is desirable that children who have quitted school, and have been confirmed and admitted to the communion, should attend the catechizing on Sundays at church for at least a year. This custom, which was formerly general, must be re-established wherever it has fallen into disuse.

"Parents and masters who do not send their children, or those entrusted to their care to a public school, must point out to the municipal authorities, or school committees, whenever they are required, what means they provide for the education of such children. . . .

"If, however, parents and masters neglect sending their children punctually to school, the clergyman must first explain to them the heavy responsibility which rests upon them; after that, the school committee must summon them to appear before it, and address severe remonstrances to them. No excuse, whatever, shall be deemed valid (exclusive of the proof that the education of the child is otherwise provided for,) except

certificates of illness signed by the medical man or the clergyman; the absence of the parents and master which had occasioned that of the children; or, lastly, the want of the necessary clothing, and funds for providing which had not been forthcoming.

"If these remonstrances are not sufficient, coercive measures are then to be resorted to against the parents, guardians, or masters. The children are to be taken to school by an officer of the police, or the parents are to be sentenced to graduated punishments or fines; and in case they are unable to pay, to imprisonment or labor, for the benefit of the parish."

To the American people this law may seem to savor something of tyranny; but I sincerely think that there is no law more paternal. It is just, for where there is an obligation there is a right, and government has the inherent power to make and enforce such laws as will secure its rights. That parents are obligated to prepare their children for achieving or maintaining their civil liberty will not be disputed; and it is likewise as certain that there is no other preparation than a good education—an education that trains and cultivates the moral and religious feelings, and strengthens and enlightens the intellect. The law is paternal, for it demands nothing but the best and greatest good of the subjects. There is nothing then in this school law of Prussia either despotic or tyrannic. Says a writer in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, (No. XXIV.) "If children provided their own education, and could be sensible of its importance to their happiness, it would be a *want*, but as it is provided by the parents, and paid for by those who do not profit by its results, it is a *duty*, and is therefore liable to be neglected." If it is the duty of parents to educate their children, and if this duty is frequently neglected, would it be wrong for government to enact laws to secure its performance? A freeman must be an intelligent man, and this government, wise as it is, cannot secure the freedom of its subjects unless they are virtuous and intelligent. As parents intend their children to be members of this republic, which is based on intelligence, sustained by intelligence, and looks to intelligence for its protection and safeguard, they are under the most solemn obligations to make their children intelligent. To permit a son, unable to read, and that *understandingly*, to go the polls, is as great an injury as parents can do their country.

After the Prussian government had organized her school system, placed over it competent and vigilant officers, and made it a legal duty for parents to send their children to school, she very wisely made provision for the *education of teachers*. There are forty-two Normal schools, or seminaries for teachers, in Prussia. In these schools, the candidates study three years before they are allowed to instruct. Cousin remarks, pp. 62 and 65,

"The best plans of instruction cannot be executed except by the instrumentality of good teachers; and the state has done nothing for popular education, if it does not watch that those who devote themselves to teaching be well prepared; then suitably placed, encouraged and guided in the duty

of continued self-improvement: and, lastly, promoted and rewarded in proportion to their advancement, or punished according to their faults. Such is the object of title VI. of the law of 1819." From this title as given by Cousin we extract the following paragraphs.

"A schoolmaster, to be worthy of his vocation, should be pious, discreet, and deeply impressed with the dignity and sacredness of his calling. He should be thoroughly acquainted with the duties peculiar to the grade of primary instruction in which he desires to be employed; he should possess the art of communicating knowledge, with that of moulding the minds of children; he should be unshaken in his loyalty to the state, conscientious in the duties of his office, friendly and judicious in his intercourse with the parents of his pupils, and with his fellow citizens in general; finally, he should strive to inspire them with a lively interest in the school, and secure to it their favor and support.

"In order gradually to provide schools with masters of this character, the care of their training must not be abandoned to chance; the foundation of primary normal schools (*Schullehrer Seminarien*) must be continued. The expenses of these establishments shall be defrayed partly by the general funds of the state, and partly by the department funds for schools.***

"The principal aim of the primary normal schools should be to form men, sound both in body and mind, and to imbue the pupils with the sentiment of religion, and with that zeal and love for the duties of a schoolmaster which is so closely allied to religion.

"The course of instruction and exercises shall comprehend all the branches which, according to the present law, are to be taught in primary schools."

Similar institutions to these should be established and supported with us by the state governments. I know of nothing in which this republic is so deficient as it is in competent teachers for her elementary schools. The people of the United States employ, annually, eighty thousand common school teachers. Among this great number but a very few have made any preparation for their duties; the most of them accidentally assume this office as a temporary employment. Now the schools will be like their teachers. Says Sarah Austin, the accomplished translator of this report, "observation long ago convinced me of the entire truth of the maxim laid down by the Prussian government, and approved by M. Cousin, that, *'as is the master, so is the school.'*" Then how necessary is it that provision be made for preparing men to make teaching a profession—a useful, honorable study and vocation for life. The state, says M. Cousin, "has done nothing for popular education till this is done."

The Inspectors of our schools, forgetting the high duties of their office, and the honor of that profession of which they are the guardians, have sometimes acted upon the principle that a poor school is better than none, and the disqualified candidate has found no difficulty in obtaining his certificate. Many of the Inspectors of our common schools are so lax and faithless that they present no

obstacle to ignorance, and no measure for the discovery and encouragement of real merit. The moral character, the aptitude to teach, the ability to communicate knowledge, are seldom inquired into. A willingness to teach cheap makes the applicant desired by the district, and the inspectors, ready to compromise their ignorance with avarice, make no hesitation in giving the certificate. The Prussian law on this subject is very different:

"Every young man whose competency is admitted shall receive a certificate, delivered and signed by the whole commission, his examiners, by their president, and by the head master of the primary Normal school, or other establishment in which he was trained to his calling. It must state his moral character, and his degree of aptitude for teaching. The certificates of capacity will therefore bear the title of 'excellent' (*vorzüglich*) 'good or sufficient' (*hinlanglich*), 'passable' (*nothdurftig*); they should also specify and positively define the degree of fitness of the person, whether for the higher primary schools, or for those who are elementary. *Such as prove incompetent shall, by a formal decree, be wholly rejected, or sent back to continue their studies.*"

The same law that demands high qualifications in the teacher makes provision for his maintenance. Report p. 37.

"1. A suitable income for schoolmasters and mistresses, and a certain provision for them when they were past service.

"2. A building for the purpose of teaching and of exercise, properly laid out, kept in repair and warmed.

"3. Furniture, books, pictures, instruments, and all things necessary for the lessons and exercises.

"4. Pecuniary assistance for the necessitous scholars.

The first is the essential point. If you would have good masters, you must first of all ensure them a maintenance. The Prussian law expresses itself on this head in the most solemn manner. "It is our firm will" says the King, in whose name it speaks, "that in the maintenance of every school, this be regarded as the most important object, and take precedence of all others."

This is as it should be. Our unwillingness to pay an adequate compensation to those who are qualified, discourages young men for preparing themselves to teach. As soon as a good education is honored and rewarded in a teacher, acquisitions extensive and suitable will be made. Reward the profession of teaching as liberally as we do the profession of law or physic, and the teacher will be as liberal in his preparation as the lawyer or physician. If parents would have better teachers, they must be willing to pay better.

The Prussian laws take great care to make all the citizens, the patrons and guardians of the public schools. In our country this is not done. Except in a few of our large cities, the leading, intelligent men overlook the common school, and give all their attention to private schools, academies, colleges, and professional seminaries. The common school is left in the hands of the careless and the ignorant; and consequently the school is in a low, useless, condition.—

It is shunned by the more wealthy and enlightened, who support private schools, exclusively, for the education of their own children. But public schools should have the fostering care of the laws, and of the leading citizens in this country as well as in Prussia. Report p. 98:

"Public schools are the basis of popular instruction in Prussia. The government in that country takes good care not to leave to chance or private speculation the noble task of the training of youth; nor does primary instruction depend at all on private schools.

The following extract contains a programme of the studies pursued in every elementary school in Prussia: pp. 55 and 56.

"Every complete elementary school necessarily comprehends the following objects:—

"1. Religious instruction, as a means of forming the moral character of children according to the positive truths of christianity.

"2. The German language, and, in provinces where a foreign language is spoken, the language of the country, in addition to the German.

"3. The elements of Geometry, together with the general principles of drawing.

"4. Calculation and Practical Arithmetic.

"5. The elements of Physics, Geography, general History, and especially the history of Prussia.

"Care must be taken to introduce and combine these branches of knowledge with the reading and writing lessons, as much as possible, independently of the instruction which shall be given on those subjects specially.

"6. Singing; with the view to improve the voices of the children, to elevate their hearts and minds, to perfect and ennoble the popular songs and church music or psalmsody.

"7. Writing and Gymnastic exercises; which fortify all the senses, and especially that of sight.

"8. The simplest manual labors, and some instructions in husbandry, according to the agriculture of the respective parts of the country.

"9. The instructions in religion, reading, writing, arithmetic and singing are strictly indispensable in every school. No school shall be considered as a complete elementary school unless it fulfil the whole scheme of instruction just marked out.

"Every burgher school shall afford instruction on the following heads:—

"1. Religion and Morals.

"2. The German language, and at the same time the language of the country in the provinces not German; reading, composition, exercises in style, study of the national classics. In all the German parts of the country, the modern foreign languages are an accessory branch of study.

"3. Latin is taught to all the children, within certain limits, as a means of exercising their faculties and their judgments, whether they be, or be not, to enter the higher schools.

"4. The elements of Mathematics, and especially a thorough course of practical arithmetic.

"5. Physical science, as far as it is suf-

ficient to explain the most remarkable phenomena of nature.

"6. Geography and history combined, in order to give some knowledge of the earth, of the general history of the world, of the people who inhabit it, and the empires into which it is divided. Prussia, its history, laws and constitution, shall form the subject of a special study.

"7. The principles of drawing shall be taught to all, concurrently with the lessons in physics, natural history, and geometry.

"8. Writing must be carefully attended to, and the hand trained to write distinctly and neatly.

"9. The singing lessons shall be attended by all the pupils, not only with the view to form them to that art, but to qualify them to assist in the services of the church with propriety and solemnity, by singing the psalms or choral music with correctness and judgment.

"10. Gymnastic exercises, adapted to the age and strength of the scholars."

In Prussia every child, however humble, has the privilege of attending every study that is mentioned in this liberal course. In comparison to these how stunted and limited are the studies pursued in our primary schools! Yet the Americans suppose that they have the best schools and the best school system in the world! This liberal and wise programme should improve and enlarge the one introduced in our schools.—Great thoroughness likewise is aimed at in all their schools: this is seen by an extract from page 287.

"Let solidity, rather than extent, be aimed at, in the course of instruction. The young masters must know a few things fundamentally, rather than many things superficially. Vague and superficial attainments must be avoided at any rate. The steady continuous labor which must be gone through to know any thing whatsoever thoroughly, is an admirable discipline for the mind. Besides nothing is so prolific as one thing well known; it is an excellent starting point for a thousand others. The final examinations must be mainly directed to the elements,—they must probe to the bottom, they must keep solidity always in view."

How true is it that one thing well known is an excellent starting point for a thousand others! This important truth should be remembered by both teacher and scholar. The sum of our knowledge is not measured by the number of ideas we obtain, but by the number of relations which the new idea has to the knowledge already in the mind. Thus, one thing well known gives an invitation to, and helps in the acquisition of any thing else that may be desired. The mastery of one point, or of any one department of knowledge, is the best assistant pupils can have in making still higher and more difficult attainments.

The remaining extracts which we shall make will be read with great interest. They contain the unqualified opinion of a great man on a very important subject—the religious instruction of the people. It is frequently said that education gives men greater power to injure others, and that it increases instead of diminishing crime and therefore since an education by depraved human

nature is most likely to be used as a means of doing evil, the instruction of the people and the diffusion of knowledge are not desirable. Now, it is true that the instruments which we use to obtain knowledge, reading, writing, cyphering, &c.—in themselves have no moral characters, and there is too, a kind of knowledge, which in itself is neither good nor bad. For example, a knowledge of the science of numbers will be as ready and as efficient in assisting the rogue as the honest man; as a knife may serve the assassin, as well as him who cuts a piece of bread with it for a crippled beggar. There are splendid, gigantic intellects which are a curse to the world. The more an evil disposed, perverted mind knows, the more it is to be dreaded, and it is undoubtedly true that an education without religious instruction, and an entire neglect of the cultivation of the heart, leads to moral mischief, rather than to individual happiness, and good. Something more must be done than merely to give the people the means by which they acquire knowledge; they must be prepared and disposed to make a right use of knowledge. We must not only enlighten the intellect, but we must train and educate the moral and the religious feelings of the heart. Says Cousin, Report p. 126.

"Christianity ought to be the basis of the instruction of the people; we must not flinch from the open profession of this maxim; it is no less politic than it is honest.—We baptize our children, and bring them up in the christian faith and in the bosom of the church; in after-life, age, reflection, the breath of human opinions, modify their early impressions but it is good that these impressions should have been made by christianity. *Popular education ought therefore to be religious, that is to say christian; for, I repeat it, there is no such thing as religion in general; in Europe, and in our days, religion means christianity. Let our popular schools then be christian; let them be so entirely and earnestly.*"

Unless christianity, the truths of the Bible are made the basis of all instruction, universal education will be of little benefit. The new testament should be introduced in all our schools: not as an easy-lesson-book, as the practice now is, that the younger children may learn to read, but as a book of morals and duties, and as containing a complete system of Ethics. Cousin remarks, p. 126.

"We must have the clergy; we must neglect nothing to bring them into the path towards which every thing urges them to turn—both their obvious interest, and their sacred callings, and the ancient services which their order rendered to the cause of civilization in Europe. But if we wish to have the clergy allied with us in the cause of popular instruction, that instruction must not be stripped of morality and religion; for then indeed it would become the duty of the clergy to oppose it, and they would have the sympathy of all virtuous men, of all good fathers of families, and even of the mass of the people, on their side. Thank God, sir, you are too enlightened a statesman to think that true popular instruction can exist without moral education, popular morality without religion, or popular religion without a church."

There is a common ground which the clergy of all denominations may take; and I know of no other class of individuals who can do more for the improvement of our common schools, or for the moral and religious education of the children. The self-denying life of the school teacher, needs the countenance and sympathy of abler and higher instructors; and, also, the consolations of the spirit of christianity. The instructor will be a much better teacher if he has the christian spirit. Says Cousin, p. 290.

"I know something of Europe, and never have I seen good schools where the spirit of christian charity was wanting." And again, from p. 291.

"I am not ignorant, sir, that this advice will grate on the ears of many persons and that I shall be thought extremely devout at Paris. Yet it is not from Rome, but from Berlin, that I address you. The man who holds this language to you is a philosopher, formerly disliked, and even persecuted, by the priesthood; but this philosopher has a mind too little affected by the recollections of his own insults, and is too well acquainted with human nature, and with the history, not to regard religion as an *indestructible power: genuine christianity, as a means of civilization for the people.*"

We will now close the review of this admirable work. The extracts have been full, that the reader may not only have the most important part of the volume before him, but also, that a comparison might be made between our own school system, and the school system of Prussia. Important practical hints, both to legislators and teachers, have been suggested, for like the patriotic Cousin, who beautifully remarked, "it is of Prussia I write, but of France I think." I have wished to do justice to the Report, but at the same time it was the good of our schools and school systems that I thought.

SCHOOL BOOKS.

In our prospectus, we expressed our intention to designate, from time to time, such text or class books as should appear to us, upon examination, to be most suitable for use in common schools. We can assure our readers that we are fully sensible of the delicacy on this part of the task we have undertaken, and of the importance, so far as our opinions are to be influential, of performing it with scrupulous fidelity and discriminating judgment.

The proper selection of school books, we well know, is a subject of the highest moment; and for this very reason it is, that we have ventured to assume the laborious and responsible task of which we are speaking.

We enter upon it in the present number by inviting the attention of our readers to a work just published by Oliver Steele, Albany, and which we understand is to be immediately offered for sale, entitled "THE YOUNG CITIZEN'S MANUAL; being a digest of the laws of the state of New-York and of the U. States relating to crimes and their punishments, and of such other parts of the laws of the State of New-York relating to the ordinary business of social life as are most necessary to be generally known; with explanatory remarks." To which is prefixed an Essay on the Principles of Civil Govern-

ment: Designed for the instruction of young persons in general, and especially for the use of Schools. By Alfred Conkling."

In recommending, as we hesitate not, earnestly, to do, the introduction of this work into our schools, we are virtually recommending, not so much the book as the subjects of which it treats, as a fit and important branch of study for youth; because, in truth, though exactly such a work as this has long been considered a desideratum, and has been repeatedly recommended by our superintendents of common schools, no other work of this precise character has hitherto appeared. On this account, we shall, we trust, readily be pardoned for dwelling upon it a little more in detail. It is true, a considerable proportion of it is adapted only to the state of New-York. But a somewhat full account of it may serve the purpose, even in other states, at least of suggesting the propriety of introducing similar works into their schools also.

We cannot better express our views of the utility and importance of this work, than by availing ourselves at once of the brief preface of the author, and which we therefore present to our readers entire.

"It is by no means the design of this manual to make every man his own lawyer." In every civilized community, under the government of laws, a separate and distinct body of men, whose chief business it is to understand the laws in all their details, and to assist the citizen in the maintenance and enforcement of his civil rights, is indispensable. It is believed, however, to be high time that such portions of our laws relating to the ordinary business of social life as can be readily understood, and especially that our *Criminal Code* should be rendered more easily accessible to all, and should henceforth form a part of the education of the whole body of our youth. "To know with precision what the laws of our country have forbidden, and the deplorable consequences to which a wilful disobedience may subject us, is a matter of universal concern." For such is the infirmity of our nature, and such the violence of human passions; so strong and so numerous are the provocations and temptations to which we are constantly exposed, that no individual, however upright, can safely conclude that he may not possibly become an offender. But a knowledge of the nature, extent and degrees of crimes, and the clearer preception likely to arise from it, of their real turpitude and of the necessity and justice, as well as of the danger of punishment, cannot but operate as a salutary restraint.

"Indeed, the opinion that a work like the present, is much wanted, has now become prevalent among intelligent and reflecting men. It is strongly expressed by the present able and enlightened Superintendent of Common Schools, in his last annual report to the legislature, and also in the report of a committee of the Regents of the University, relative to the education of teachers.

"The following work is not, however, limited to those parts of our laws indicated in these reports as proper to compose such a work, but embraces, also, some other matter which appeared to the author too important to be omitted. For example, to the abstract of the criminal code of this state, he deemed proper, for reasons too obvious to require enumeration to subjoin a summary of the criminal laws of the United States. He trusts, also, that he has considerably enhanced the value of the work, by the introduction of occasional explanatory remarks; and especially by the Preliminary Essay on the Principles of Civil Government, studiously adapted to the comprehension of boys, and designed especially for their instruction, by being used as an ordinary reading exercise in schools. He cannot but cherish the hope, that this brief essay, meagre and familiar as it may appear to mature and cultivated minds; may contribute something towards disseminating among all classes of the rising generation, just notions of Civil Government, an object which every enlightened man must perceive to be of immeasurable im-

portance, and every enlightened patriot ardently desire to see accomplished."

In a note, the author gives an extract of considerable length, (which we regret the want of room to present to our readers,) from "Instructions for the better government and organization of Common Schools," sent out by the then Superintendent of Common Schools of the State of New-York, so early as the year 1819, in which the propriety and utility of introducing into our schools the study of select portions of our laws, and particularly of our criminal codes, are strikingly portrayed, by "the enlightened, practical and patriotic citizen" who then filled the office of superintendent and who, as secretary to the Regents of the University, and as president of the board of trustees of the Albany Academy, has since, on more than one occasion, publicly reiterated the views he then entertained.

Concurring as we do in the opinions of the author as expressed in his preface, fortified as they are by those of the enlightened public officers to whom he refers, we should not hesitate to recommend this work as the *only* one of the kind, even if it had appeared to us to have been in some respects imperfect. But in truth no such imperfections will be found; the work needs no such, or any other extraneous support. Its intrinsic merits, whether we consider it in reference to its subject matter—its method of arrangement—or its style of execution, entitle it, in our judgment, to a rank among the best of our academic or school books. As to its subject matter, enough has been already said to show how elevated it is in character, and how interesting and appropriate for youth in its application to practical pursuits. We will here only add that in proportion as a knowledge of the obligations we are under to our country is necessary to a proper discharge of them; and in proportion as the discharge of such obligations is among the first duties of a good citizen, in that or in the same proportion are we to estimate the relative importance of the subject treated of in the work under review. But the merit of which we are now speaking belongs to the subject, not to the author. Except in so far as regards the introductory essay on civil government, where much will be found which, if not entirely new, is presented under new and interesting aspects, the author's merit must be measured by the arrangement, style, and execution of the work; and according to that measure, or criterion of merit, we consider him entitled to the highest commendation. The general arrangement of the work is the best that the nature of the subject treated of would admit. Not being a regular treatise on a single specific subject—but on a variety of subjects without any necessary connection in a logical or consecutive order, it does not require, nor does it admit a strict logical arrangement, where one position follows from another in the order of sequence of premises and conclusion. So far as a knowledge of general principles ought to precede their application to particular cases, the arrangement of the work is, as it obviously should be, subservient to that important end. In the selections from the criminal code, the arrangement is substantially the same as that adopted in the sta-

tutes from which the selections are made; and in all other parts of the work the arrangement is such as would most obviously occur to any one well acquainted with the subject. In respect therefore to method or general arrangement, the merit of the author is more negative, than positive—that of not having departed from a plain obvious course, rather than that of having struck out or pursued a new or unexpected one. But in respect to the style and execution of the work, we claim for the author a positive merit, and that of a high order: We have seldom found in *any* work, and *never* in one of a kindred character, more perspicuity, purity, correctness, or simplicity of style. These are all conceded to be sterling requisites in a didactic work, and in proportion as they are indispensable in such a work, to a certain degree, in that proportion do they entitle the author to special commendation when they transcend that degree. If any one of these primary qualities of style in the work before us, be more conspicuous than another, it is probably that of perspicuity, which, wherever practical utility is aimed at, is the most cardinal of all the virtues in composition.

The author of the work we are reviewing, is a Judge of the District Court of the United States, for the Northern district of New York. He is already favorably known to the public as the author of a Treatise on the Organization, Jurisdiction and Practice of the Courts of the United States. The execution of such a work as that now presented for review required much labor as well as much accurate, if not great legal knowledge; and the public are greatly indebted to the author for his liberal contribution from the stores of his legal knowledge, and for his time and services devoted to the preparation and publication of his work. The preparation of a suitable class or text books for the use of academies and schools, is a service which requires and ought to command the best talents of the country—and be followed by its best rewards; but unfortunately it is too often considered too humble a service for those who are most able to perform it—and where such men as the author of the present work volunteer such a service, their claim to be considered public benefactors is so much the more enhanced.

The Introductory Essay on the principles of civil government, appears to have been designed by the author chiefly as a reading exercise; but in whatever mode it be used, it is of the highest moment that the important principles and truths which it contains should be thoroughly understood and treasured up in memory by every American youth; and we know of no book in which they are at once so briefly and so plainly stated.

This work is very appropriately inscribed to the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer, "as an enlightened and munificent patron of education and a friend of civil liberty and social order."

The following article is from the pen of Charles Davies, Professor of Mathematics at West Point. This distinguished scholar and successful teacher has given to our children and youth, the best "Common School Arithmetic" now in use, and his article on the study of this important branch of edu-

cation, will, we doubt not, be read with great interest.

ON THE STUDY OF ARITHMETIC.

An accurate and comprehensive knowledge of arithmetic forms an important element of a practical liberal education. The farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, the physician and the lawyer, must apply daily, the rules of arithmetic, in tracing the progress and ascertaining the results of their business. It is, therefore, of the first importance that the best methods of teaching arithmetic should be adopted, that the study of it may prove both interesting and useful.

We call a single thing—*one*; if there is more than one, we say, *two, three, four, five, six, &c.*: and those terms by which we distinguish one or more things of the same kind, are called *numbers*.

The single thing, of which the number may express several, is called the *unit* of the number. Thus, if we unite six apples, *one* apple is the unit of the number.

Arithmetic treats of numbers. It is both a science and an art. It is a science when it treats of the properties of numbers, of the manner in which they are formed, and the laws by which they are combined. It is an art, in the various rules which it gives for the use of numbers.

In arithmetic, numbers are represented by certain characters which are called figures. Of these there are ten.

The character 1, denotes a single thing, and, therefore, always stands up for the unit of the number. The ten figures, when placed separately, will only express the numbers from one to nine,—the 0 expressing merely the absence of a thing.

If then, ten things are to be expressed by figures there is no character for it. We must then combine the known characters. This we do by placing the 0 on the right of the 1, thus, 10, and read it, *ten*. Now, this ten may be regarded as a *single ten*, and in this sense may be considered as a *unit*: but the value of this unit is *ten times* greater than that of the unit represented by 1. This discovers to us the *law* by which the figures are continued. This new unit, which is ten times greater than the first, may be called a unit of the *second order*.

We can now express all numbers less than one hundred. For, suppose we have the number eighteen, we have to express one unit of the second order, or one ten, and eight units of the first order; we therefore write 18. For ninety-nine, we have nine units of each order, and therefore write 99.

But we cannot yet express the number one hundred. To do this, therefore, we must form a new combination, which we do by placing two cyphers on the right of 1, which gives 100, and which is read, one hundred.

This hundred, however, is but a *single hundred*, and in this sense may be regarded as a unit ten times greater than the unit of the second order, and one hundred times greater than the unit of the first order. Let therefore this last unit be called a unit of the *third order*.

We can now express all numbers less than one thousand. Take the number four hundred and thirty-seven. There are seven units of the first, three of the second, and four of the third order: hence we write 437.

For numbers which exceed 999 we must form a new combination; but the *law* by which the different units are related to each other is the same, whatever be the number of figures used. This law of formation explains the reason for carrying one for every ten in the addition of numbers, for *ten units of any one order* or equal to one unit of the next higher order.

There are two distinct classes of numbers to be considered in arithmetic. The one, in which the unit of the number is not named, and the other in which the unit of the number is named. For example, in the number 35; the *particular thing* of which the number expresses thirty-five, is not mentioned, that is, the unit is not named; this therefore belongs to the first class, and such numbers are called *simple numbers*. But if the number should express thirty-five yards of cloth, the *unit* of the number would then be one yard of cloth—it would therefore be named, and the number would belong to the second class: such numbers would be called *denominate numbers*, because the unit is denominated, or named. They are, however, more generally called *compound numbers*, but this name would seem not to be very appropriate, as it is difficult to see how the number becomes *compounded* by simply naming the unit to which it refers.

Expressing or writing numbers correctly by means of figures, is called *Notation*: and reading them correctly when written, is called *Numeration*. These two operations, although totally distinct are often confounded together; and indeed, in some of the best arithmetics, the two terms are used to express the same thing.

As a unit is the beginning of all numbers, so a clear idea of it, lies at the beginning of all correct knowledge of arithmetic. Let the scholar be constantly questioned on this point, for unless he understands the first element of numbers it is obvious that he cannot progress understandingly. Having taken that step, let the unit of the second order be fully explained; then the unit of the third order, then the unit of the fourth order, &c. when this is done there will be no difficulty in writing all numbers with facility and accuracy, and reading them correctly.

The addition of numbers comes next in order. Addition consists in finding a single number which shall contain as many units as are found in all the numbers to be added. It is plain that only units of like values can be added together. For example, one simple unit and a unit of the second order, will neither give two simple units, nor two tens.

Therefore, when the numbers are written down for addition, units of like value must be placed under each other, for these a one can be added together. The same principles obtain in subtraction, multiplication and division.

The denominate numbers, or those in which the unit of the number is named or expressed, form an important branch of arithmetic. They are operated upon in the same manner as simple numbers, with the single exception, that as the units of the different order do not bear to each other the same relation as the units of the simple numbers, the rules require slight modifications.

For example, in the number £3 7s 8d,

there are three units, viz £1 1s 1d. Now, twelve units of the lowest order make one of the next higher, and twenty units of the second order make one of the third. Hence, in the addition of denominate numbers, we do not carry one for every ten as in simple numbers; but we apply precisely the same principle, in carrying one for every so many units of one denomination as make one unit of the denomination next higher. We also apply the same principles in the subtraction, multiplication and division of denominate numbers.

Having shown that any number of *entire* things may be expressed by figures, we are to inquire into the next place, whether it be not possible to express parts of a thing by means of figures.

If we divide a unit, or a single thing, into two parts, each part is called a half. Now, we have no figure or character to express either of these halves, and we therefore do it by two of the figures already known by writing thus $\frac{1}{2}$. The figure above the line we call the *numerator* and the one below it the *denominator*.

Had the unit been divided into three parts one of them would have been expressed by $\frac{1}{3}$. But suppose that it were required to express two of the three parts, we should then write $\frac{2}{3}$. In each of the above examples, the denominator shows into how many equal parts the units are divided, and the numerator, how many are expressed in the fraction.

This simple arrangement of the figures will then enable us to express all possible parts of the unity. For example, 65-80 indicates that the unit has been divided into 80 equal parts, and that 65 of those parts are taken in the expression. The numbers which thus express the parts of unity are called *fractions*. Arithmetic may therefore be divided into two parts, 1st. That which relates to the entire units or whole numbers; and, 2dly. That which relates to fractions.

By the aid of the ten simple characters we are not only able to express whole numbers, but we can also express all the parts into which things may be divided.

The arrangement of these characters by which so much is affected, ought to be fully and carefully explained. Indeed, they form the basis both of integral and fractional arithmetic.

Extract from an Address delivered before the Association of Teachers of Hamilton county Ohio; by THOMAS BRAINARD.

In order to become well qualified to teach even a common school, a young man must be at great expense of time and money.

His education must be equal if not superior, to that possessed by a majority of the lawyers and physicians of the country. The employment itself is responsible, oppressive, and often vexatious. It offers no opportunity to shine. It holds forth no crown of earthly glory. The time spent in it, is not an investment of capital designed to yield a large future profit. The monthly salary and the desire to be useful, must be the only motive to enter upon this employment. And what is the salary that is to compensate a young man of good talents—of liberal education—of pleasing address and well balanced character, for a year's labor? The paltry sum

of 150 to 200 dollars. This in many parts of this state, would be regarded as a good salary. It might support a laborer whose employment not only permitted, but required coarse durable apparel, and whose time was to be spent in the solitude of his own family. But will public sentiment, allow the school teacher to assume the cheap, rough pepper and salt tunic for the winter, and to go barefoot in summer? Would it be desirable for teachers to adopt so rigid an economy? Are they not expected to be examples of neatness and propriety of dress? Is it not assumed always that they will associate with the best society of our villages? How can they do this with decent respectability on a salary of 200 dollars? After paying bills for board, clothing, and contingencies, can they save any portion of this sum. Is it right, is it expedient, is it honorable, thus to depress a class of intelligent men to whom, more than any other, is entrusted the destiny of our nation—the perpetuity of our institutions? The evil of which I complain, is limited to no one section of country—to no one period of time. It has existed and wrought out its pernicious results for two centuries, among our eastern brethren, and seeks to be equally triumphant here.

So long as our farmers and mechanics rob teachers of a proper compensation, we must expect that our common schools will be sickly and powerless. Teachers whose wages will allow them to make no provision for future competence—teachers who are harassed with duns, and in constant apprehension of poverty, will be deficient in that dignified independence of character, and in those generous exertions which a better provision would call forth. Young men of such powerful intellect and rich attainments, as peculiarly qualify them to draw out, and mould the minds and hearts of our youth, will fly from an occupation beset by the genius of famine. They will seek other professions, and leave the business of teaching to second and third rate men.

Did time allow, it would be easy to show that the efficiency of schools is impeded everywhere, by the want of popular intelligence on the subject of education. Parents should learn to discriminate, between the assuming pretender, and the intelligent and unostentatious instructor—they should reflect that if it is difficult for them to exert parental control, in their own families, when all have been subjected to a common influence, it must be a much more delicate and responsible task to unite under one set of rules, and one system of education the heterogeneous actions of twenty families. They should take upon themselves the responsibility of inquiring into the solid improvement made by their children, and when they have found a faithful teacher, should throw around him their whole influence. Especially should they guard against a practice, now too common, of changing teachers with every caprice of childhood, or upon the approach of every new pretender. This represses the enterprise of judicious and able teachers, by rendering it unsafe for them to found extensive and permanent institutions of learning. By this proneness to change, the patient and experienced instructor is often compelled to give place to the pedagogical quack, who

can show receipts for teaching grammar, geography and arithmetic in twelve lessons.

On all the subjects here glanced at, there is, if I mistake not, much need for the diffusion of light among parents. Until these natural guardians of children can be persuaded to awake from their lethargy, intelligent and philanthropic teachers will be compelled to labor almost in vain. Subject to the caprice of parents of too little discrimination to decide when their children are well taught, teachers must expect that their best efforts will often, be met with chilling neglect or unfeeling rebuke.

But they have reason to believe that the morning of a brighter day is now dawning upon their profession. Their appeal to the patriotism and piety of their fellow-citizens has not been in vain. Through the length and breadth of the great valley, the press, like the voice of many waters, is arousing the stupid to think, and the obdurate to feel. The mandate of public sentiment has gone forth, that *our youth must be educated*. The tide of right feeling, with constantly accumulating power, is moving on. It may be obstructed, but it cannot be stayed. Its gathering force will sweep away every obstruction, until its pure waters shall lave every hamlet of the west.

You have already secured the press, and the favor of community. You may reasonably expect, that every patriotic farmer and mechanic, every well educated physician and lawyer, will deposite their contributions upon this altar. You may anticipate that our legislators will not deem it sufficient to enact salutary laws—they will also lend their influence to the creation of a purified public sentiment, without which, the provisions of the statute book will avail little. You have special reasons to hope that the clergy, of all denominations, will make the duty of promoting education a part of their constant teaching, and thus secure not a fitful but a permanent piety. They will rely for permanent success in their sacred office, not upon the phrenzy of the passions, but the decisions of a cultivated intellect. They will be anxious to associate the profession and practice of our holy religion, with those refinements which give order and loveliness to society. I dare pledge to this cause now, and hereafter, the warm sympathies and the earnest co-operation of 2,000 educated ministers of my denomination.

Under the influence now abroad, attended with the blessing of God, we may hope that all the obstacles to which I have adverted in this address, will be removed. Those teachers in this vicinity, who have given strength to this influence, will then see the consummation of their desires. To them, the west will owe a debt of gratitude, not less than she ascribes to those pioneers who subdued her forests, and opened her physical resources. These teachers may not be commemorated in the legend or the song. No idle canvass, nor useless marble, may bear their names to other times. They may not find a place in the dull recollections of history; but they will live in the augmented intelligence, piety, and happiness of the hundred millions who are soon to inhabit the west. They will live on the tablet of that memory, over which no oblivion can roll its wave. In the

final approbation of the 'Great Teacher' of our race, they will meet at once their felicity and their reward.

Necessity of good elementary schools, and the patriotic duties which it imposes upon enlightened and influential citizens; the high responsibilities of those to whom the selection of teachers is confided, and the necessity of fidelity in the execution of their trust.

The importance of good common or district schools is seen and felt but by few.—The necessity of virtue and intelligence among a free people is always admitted; yet the great majority of our citizens are almost wholly indifferent to the primary schools, the very sources of a nation's intelligence; for, as it is well known, nineteen citizens out of twenty receive all their education in them. Even reflecting men seldom look so near the beginning of things as to see that the blessings and perpetuity of our happy government are in the hands and under the direction of the common schoolmaster. In our common schools the nation receives its character and education. Mothers and schoolmasters sow the seeds either of tyranny, anarchy, or liberty; for the strength and destiny of any community lies in the virtue and intelligence of its younger members. A wise and good government can be established and sustained only by the wise and good; and if the teachers in our common schools are ignorant and vicious, they can impart nothing but what they have, and the youthful part of the nation must be like them; but if they are wise and good, the character of the people will be the same.—In our common schools, our ministers and magistrates, legislators and presidents, commenced their education. Here did the men whom we admire as the strength and beauty of our nation receive their first impressions, their first principles, and their first character. In these schools did the men to whom we look up for counsel and instruction commence their moral and intellectual greatness; and in these primary fountains of knowledge are placed those who will perpetuate or destroy all that is excellent and beautiful in this young republic.

Is not the condition and character of our common schools, then, of the highest importance? Are not the character and qualifications of their teachers of the very first consideration? These schools have in embryo the future communities of the land.—With them the empire and liberty of these states must rise or fall; for they are at once the repositories of freedom, and the pillars of the republic. And now, we again ask, are not these schools of the highest importance? Should not every individual feel the deepest interest in their character and condition? Should not the strong arm of government be thrown around them for protection? And should not the wisdom of legislation watch over and counsel them with a parental solicitude? To what purpose shall we enact laws, unless there is intelligence to perceive their justice, and principle to which they can appeal? And what other fountains of intelligence have we for the whole people, but our common schools? But do these schools receive that close attention, that friendly aid, that enlightened and fost

ering care, which their high importance demands? Our representatives in legislation have done well, but as individuals we do nothing! Our intelligent men appear as if our individual happiness, and the glory and prosperity of this nation rested rather in our constitutions, revenues, and armies, than in the virtue and intelligence of the whole people. And how often do philanthropists forget that the chief part of human vice is evidently founded on the predominance of the sensual over the moral and intellectual nature?

The learned and leading men in nearly every section of the United States, overlook the common school, and give all their attention, influence, and pecuniary support to select schools, academies, colleges, and seminaries. These men seldom inquire into the character or capacity of the teacher of the district-school: not giving these schools their patronage, they feel entirely indifferent to their condition. The teacher, consequently, is selected by the ignorant; and the whole management of the school left to the direction of the careless and illiterate. The uninformed part of the district know not the proper qualifications of a teacher, or the value of an education; and therefore a man of but very limited acquirements, and probably of many forbidding qualities, and without the least aptitude to teach, is often employed to impart character and education to the children. What may we expect the teacher to be when chosen by such men!—What efficiency can we look for in the school, when the careless and the ignorant have the whole direction!

These schools, then, should have the superintendence of the learned and leading men; they should assist in making choice of the teacher; they should give the teacher their co-operation, and encourage him by their attention and their patronage. This more favored part of the community should feel that they have a duty to perform towards the less favored; and that the blessings of society are multiplied by affording the means of moral and intellectual instruction to every individual. The learned and wealthy should perceive that the education of the infant mind is far less expensive to them than the support of the aged criminal; that the fruitfulness of their lands depends not so much upon the richness of the soil as upon the intelligence of the cultivators; and that the labor of him whose head can help his hands is far more profitable than the service of the ignorant. The learned and wealthy should see likewise that universal education is the only true security of life and property.

Learned and influential men may do much for common schools, by encouraging qualified teachers, and by obtaining for them public assistance. They may give their respect and lend their influence to the profession of teaching, and by this means make it more reputable and lucrative than it is at present. They may give interest and assistance to instructions and associations which are intended to qualify teachers and diffuse knowledge; and they may see that legislation does all it can do for such schools.

The duties of Inspectors are very important to common schools. As the character

and usefulness of the schools depend upon the qualifications of the teachers, the inspectors should be strict in their examinations, and well assured of the competency of those who receive certificates. In organizing the school system, inspectors were appointed to prevent the disqualified from entering into the responsible profession of teaching.—They are to judge what candidates are prepared for instructing; and to admit none but such as are qualified. Thus the character of the district schools is placed almost entirely in their hands. It is in their power to admit none but such as promise to be useful in their vocation and honorable to their profession; or, by being lax and faithless, to give certificates to those who have not one necessary qualification; and who will, by attempting to discharge duties of which they are entirely ignorant, bring disgrace upon themselves and their employment. The laxity and ignorance of some inspectors is one great cause of the low and useless condition of many of our common schools. They have acted upon the principle that a poor school is better than none; and thus have given their certificate to those who they were conscious were unqualified. Thus the candidate's examination, under the board of inspectors, has frequently been little else than mere form and ceremony; affording no obstacle to ignorance, and no measure for the discovery and encouragement of real merit.

The inspectors are requested by the inhabitants of a certain district "to be lenient to such a candidate, for he is a cousin, or can be hired cheap; and although he has not much learning, he will do well enough for their children." The inspectors acting upon their old principle, that a poor teacher is better than none; and forgetting the high duties of their office, and the honor of that profession of which they are the guardians, listen to the request, and the disqualified candidate finds no difficulty in obtaining his certificate. This compromise with the ignorance and avarice on the part of inspectors, has placed men as teachers of our common schools who would not be trusted by their employers with a favorite horse.—Such is the consequence of unfaithfulness among inspectors. Many of them should be far more rigid than they have heretofore been; and they should rigidly and watchfully exercise the whole of their duties.

They should not only ascertain the amount of knowledge that is requisite for a teacher, but should discover his powers of communicating to others the knowledge that he may possess. This latter qualification inspectors almost entirely overlook. But, as a teacher, it is certainly as important that he should be able to impart to others what he knows, as it is to be familiar with the branches which he is expected to teach. And he should be able, not only to communicate what he has acquired, but he should be able to communicate it to children. The teacher should be able to simplify and illustrate, and adapt his instructions to the infant mind. But whether the candidate has this necessary ability or not, the inspectors seldom ascertain. This is frequently found to be a serious neglect; for teachers are often seen in our common schools who have

sufficient knowledge of the elementary branches which they teach, but who are wholly unqualified for giving instruction to others. The want of this qualification is a common defect among teachers; and inspectors should be the more watchful over their applicants for certificates. Inspectors should ascertain whether the candidate is fond of the society of children and youth; and whether he has studied the operations of the youthful mind, and found out how children think and learn.

And, above all, they should know that the applicant possesses a good moral character. Many are admitted to teach in our primary schools, in consideration of their experience or high qualifications, who are well known to lead immoral lives, and to entertain and teach the very worst of principles. The highest qualifications should never procure a certificate when there is the least blemish on the moral character; and the inspectors here should be firm, and require some knowledge of the candidate's former life. I know not any duties more important and responsible, in relation to district schools, than those which belong to inspectors. But how often are they shamefully and criminally discharged! If schools are as their teachers (and they certainly are), how strict should inspectors be in their examinations!

As the trustees of a common school are local officers, living within the district, they have a close and continued superintendence over the school. Their duties are to employ a teacher, keep the school-house in repair, and supply it, or see that it is supplied, with all necessities which the comfort of the teacher and scholars may require. While they are in office, the immediate management of the school is put into their hands. If it is the voice of the district, it becomes the duty of the trustees to see that a proper teacher is constantly employed. They must judge of the applications of teachers, and refer the most promising to the inspectors. If the school should be vacant, and there should be no applications for teachers, it is the duty of the trustees to make it known abroad that an instructor is wanted in their district. It is also the business of the trustees to see that the school-house is of a proper size, in a good condition, and is comfortably furnished with fixtures, wood, and water. If any necessary should be wanting, they have the power, and it is their duty, to order it, and call upon the district for payment. The trustees should likewise reconcile the difficulties which may arise between the teachers and scholars, or the teacher and the employers. The number of children in the district who draw public money must be made out by the trustees, and reported to the commissioners of common schools.—These are some of the principal duties of the trustees of district schools. It can be seen, that they are of such importance that the manner in which they are discharged will greatly affect the interest and usefulness of the school.—*District School.*

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